

THE
DECLARATION
OF CAPTAIN
ALEXANDER CHARTERS,

Brother of the House of AINSFIELD,

Written and subscribed by himself in Prison,
and delivered, and read publickly
at his Execution at EDINBURGH,
the 21. of June, 1650.

Wherein Gods great mercy was seen in Reclaiming him
from such a course, wherein many perished.

PROV. 28. 13.

*He that covereth his sinne shall not prosper, But he that confesseth
and forsaketh, shall finde mercy.*



EDINBURGH,
Printed by Evan Tyler, Printer to the Kings
most Excellent Majesty, 1650.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN READER.

His great and glorious work of Reformation, hath been promoting upon the wheels of Gods Providence this many years; The Lord who is omnipotent, could have done all as perfectly at once, as in the duration and succession of many ages; yet he hath rather pleased by gradual access, to remove his own operations to the period of their perfect accomplishment. The Lord continued the great work of his first Creation six dayes; when he might have done as as soon as he raised Lazarus out of the grave, by the word of his mouth. The Lord might have finished this great and glorious work of Reformation, at the ending of the twenty seventh of July, 1637. But that his long contesting with the contumacy of obstinate men; might make much more for the manifestation of his power and glory, by so many wondrous changes, and parcels, as also to show his unconceivable love and free mercy in Jesus Christ, towards his poor long-suffering covenant people by their so many strange deliverances. And then to show forth the glory of his Justice in the great variety of his Judgements upon so many obstinate opposers of this glorious work, who now by their obstinacy resist the work of the Lord, have gotten the name of Malignants. Whose hearts crye God ha's and makes far, and their eares heavy, and thus their eyes, lest they should see, and hear with their eares, and understand with their heart, and so therefore and be healed; sensuall eyes and eares, with strength of naturall parts they lack not: But illumination, and a spirituall apprehension of the use of Gods great works, and of the way of his dispensation, in order to his own ends, they perceive, see, nor know not. Thus it may evidently appear, that all the wonders that can be wrought before their eyes, without the work of grace, will never availe for mans conversion; such is the blindness of men, that they will not consider the intulness of their sin, in their daring so to oppose the work of the Lord: they conceive not how near their sin is unto that sin which is unto death, 1 Joh. 5. 16. When as poor silly Curres they have againe beaten, the Spaine, and the bright Sun of righteousness, when Blaw-like, mocking not only the poor in heart, but the King of Sarnis himselfe, who when hee calls and knock, standing out his armes dooly: they will not hear, and Pharaoh-like, have their refuge to the arme of flesh, not considering that the holy Covenant, is at oyle among the Ignorers which will ever be upmo, they will not be cured: they will not beleve, but still practise against the holy Covenant with gashing of teeth, and when they have laid their accompt by their laborious policy, to bring about their own ends, they shall in end find, that they shall bring about nothing but Gods purposes: their own confusion, and the lamentable ruine of their states and houses. How rare a thing is it to see amongst them a sincere convert; innumerable and Christlesse way goe they to scaffold, without conviction, feare, or trembling, but as it were to a Stage-play, scoffing and contemning the censures of the Church, and Gods holy word, till they are about to enter in the very gulf of endless Eternity. But he who is love it selfe, even the God of love; had thoughts of love and mercy towards this truly Noble and Holy man, Alexander Charter, who did long follow the drove, of the perishing multitude, being long wrapped up in the darkness of a malignant eye in him, the greatnesse of Gods love and free mercy hath appeared, that the Lord hath still loved him, even when he was burning and biting in the flames of combustion, and the Lord were both lifted up against Christ and his Saints, yet hath the Virgin Sonne overlooked all, and by this rare example of mercy, picked out this black swain, to make of a poor sinner a good Son, and of a persecutor a Preacher, as may be seen by the underwritten Declaration, written and subscribed with his own hand, before a Court of Magistrates.



Good Christian people, God, in his wise providence, hath
 thought fit to make me an example of publick justice at this
 time, that all those who have not fallen, may be strength-
 ned and confirmed in the way of truth, and others who have
 bin, and are going on in those wicked courses, for the which
 now I am punished, may be reclaimed, which is that my
 soul doth desire, and shall pray the Lord to open the eyes of
 their understanding, that they may see the fearfull guiltinesse lies upon their
 soules, and the wrath of God hanging above their heads for the same, that so by
 sincere and speedy repentance they may turn unto the Lord, that the riches of
 his free grace may be evidenced in their conversion, that they may all be made
 partakers of that eternall life, which I trust through the merits of my Redeemer
 to be made partaker of, when this naturall life that I have now to lay down
 shall be taken from me; And truly, I cannot enough magnifie Gods free love
 unto me, that he did not destroy me when I was in the height and heat of a sin-
 full course, fighting against his cause, but hath reserved me unto this time; that
 the glory of his free love might be so much the more magnified and extolled:
 Which cause he hath so truly owned to be his own by so many evident and un-
 deniable arguments, that I dare say the greatest enemy and opposer of the same,
 if he speak in conscience, and not wilfully blindfold his eyes, will say as much.
 For look back to the beginning of these troubles, and you shall clearly perceive
 that what ever was plotted or contrived against the Lords people or his cause
 in this land, turned directly to the shame of the contrivers and plotters, and how
 the Lord hath rewarded the prime opposers, both Church-men and great Poli-
 ticians, to a great many of you is very well knowne. Secondly, look upon the
 prime undertakers imployed against this work (I am bound in all charity, to be-
 lieve that our late Sovereign from whom they did purchase commission, is now
 with the Lord) were men more regarding their own private interest, then the
 glory of God, or the Kings interest, which they had so much in their mouthes;
 as was seen by the consequence in joyning with, and giving Commissions to
 persons desperately sworne enemies and opposers to the true Reformed Re-
 ligion, and how those men should have advanced the same, or been faith-
 full to our King, professing the said Religion, I leave it to all indifferent religi-
 ous and rationall men to judge. And though the Lord suffered the Rod of those
 wicked men to lye upon the back of the righteous for a time, and that they did
 shed the blood of Gods people like water, and made the fields and cities of this
 land to swimme therewith, yet at last how the Lord did overtake those bloody
 Irishes, Papists, and others with his vengeance, and of late the prime under-
 takers, is not unknown to you all; For the which this land hath now reason to
 rejoyce in the Lord, that the strength of the wicked and malignant party is now
 broken, and all their plots and machinations fully discovered: And the same

Lord that hath delivered you from fear of the enemies within, will likewise deliver you from the great threatnings of the insulting enemies of the neighbour lands, If you prove thankfull for this mercy and deliverance you have received, and keep close with God by adhering courageously to his cause and Covenant. I shall now crave pardon to speak a word concerning our now gracious King, whom I pray God bless with length of dayes, and put the wicked from about him; that his throne may be established in righteousness: And it is thus, that what Commissions have been granted by him, (nay I may rather say, extorted) against this nation, that the Subjects of this Kingdom may not conceive prejudice against him for the same, or think, that of his naturall disposition he inclin'd to that course he was led upon, or that in any way he had, or hath thoughts against the good of Religion; No, God forbid you should thus think, but impute it rather to the cunning and malice of those who purchased them, and to the immaturity of his years, who at that time was too flexible to their counsels, For I dare boldly say, and am very hopefull, that if the Lord put faithfull counsellors about him, he shall prove as gracious a King as ever ruled this Nation: You will pardon this my digression, I will now return to what concerns my selfe and present condition.

Good People,

You see me here ready to lay down my life by a just sentence of Parliament, I am an object for Gods mercy and your prayers, The sentence for which I am now to receive this publick punishment, was given forth against me, for joyning with those desperately wicked enemies to Religion, of the which I was speaking just now; for the which I doe not only stand guilty of temporall death by the law of this land, but also of the eternal wrath of God, without his free mercy in Christ Jesus my Redeemer, if I should be rewarded according to the merit of my offence; For how fearfull a guiltinesse lies upon my conscience (I will now glorifie God by a confession, though I should bring shame upon my selfe) I shall now declare, that all those that hear me, may pray to the Lord to pardon this my publick guiltinesse, and all other my personall faults and offences which are past number, yet the Lords mercy is above all his works, and through the blood of the New Covenant, I hope all those my sins shall be purged and washed away.

When this land did first enter into Covenant with God, *Anno*, 1638. I did swear and subscribe the same, and did engage personally in the service in *England* the first year; But what a fearful defection I made, by joyning afterward with the enemies of the doctrine and discipline, which I swore by that Covenant to maintain, and the breaking of my vows to God for personall Reformation, which I was likewise sworne unto, it is known to God and my own conscience, and not unknown to some here present. And truly I must ingenuously confess, and that with a sorrowfull heart, that in all the courses I have been upon

some light of conscience checking me, which I bore down, and smothered by setting before my eyes worldly respects, as favour of Princes, and great men, and (that enemy to my salvation) the point of honour, never to relinquish a cause though never so bad; for which I do now acknowledge my unfeigned sorrow and repentance, and begs pardon at the Throne of Grace for this my guiltinesse.

And now I come to make known unto you, how Satan dealt with me when he drew me to this Apostacy, and shall desire i fthere be any that are now my hearers, who are or have been covenant-breakers, may examine themselves, if the like way Satan hath used with them, that so they may repent, and those that have not fallen, may stand fast and be watchfull by my example, to avoyd such snares: And first before I made publick defection from the cause, Satan got in upon me by seducing me to personall vices, in particular, drunkenness, and all other vices accompanying that, as whoredome, swearing, prophane and filthy communication, lying, brawling and quarrelling, abuse of the creatures, nay in a word, from a ratiollall creature to become worse then a beast, of all which vices and many more, occasioned by that sin, my soul is now guilty. Thus having begun to grow dissolute and prophane in my life, by giving my selfe over to commit all manner of wickednesse with wantonnesse and greedinesse, sin became so customary, as the conscience thereof was quite gone, I became carelessse of all religious duties, by prophaneing the Sabbath, neglecting all the publick Ordinances of Gods worship, as receiving the Sacrament, hearing of Sermons, publick or private prayer, nay in a word, I became a contemner of the Gospell, a despiser of Gods servants, and a mocker of all that made conscience of religious duties, or walking strictly before God, so that Religion became a thing so indifferent unto me, that I could, and did goe as frequently and more to Masse, and to Idolatrous Churches, as to the reformed, when I was beyond the Sea; And at my return to *England*, for Common Prayer I made no scruple of it: being there, I joyned my self with those parties that pretended for the King, and how wickedly I lived there, the Lord he knowes, and grant me pardon for the same, for though naturally I inclined too much to wickednesse, yet evill society helped it; when I had thus lived for a while, the Lord essayed to reclaym me by the Rod of Imprisonment, but in stead of making a sanctified use of that affliction, I became worse, and lived more dissolutely in Prison, then I had done before; so that my heart grew more and more hardened in wickednesse. Being got free out of prison, in stead of returning to *Scotland*, as I was advised by my well wishers, I went back to *Oxford*, where I joyned again to that party I had been formally with, but remaining there but some few moneths, I was engaged with *Montrosse*, he undertaking by his means, as he cald it, to reduce *Scotland* to obedience. But entring at *Damfreis*, his stay was short, and his successe not great, where I left him, and did never again see him, whilhe had with his bloody Irishes and others his wicked Associates, made havock of the people of God in severall conflicts; And after that deplorable fight of *Kilgerb*, Satan again enticed me ro

for that wick-d erue, but the Lord did not suffer them long to prosper, in their wick-dnesse, for what reward they received for their former cruelties and blood-shed, there may be some here were eye-witnesse: And for my selfe, The Lord again shewed himselfe displeased with my wayes, by making me prisoner, where I was kept in *Sterling* for a twelve moneth; but the civility I received there being such, and my liberty not much restrained, I did not take it as an affliction from God, never taking notice of Gods hand or displeasure against me for opposing his cause, I being released from that easie restraint (I cannot call it imprisonment) returned to that place of the Kingdome, where I had greatest interest: and after I had given a seeming satisfaction to the Church (I must ingenuously acknowledge the deceitfulness and hypocrisie of my own heart, for it was not cordiall) I was after some conference with the ministry, admitted to subscribe the mutuall League and Covenant. Truly, at that time I did it something unwillingly, not being desirous to joyne with those in *England*, I did conceive were enemies to Monarchicall Government, and no great friends to the person of our late King, as by wofull experience we have seen prove too true: yet though there be awicked party now prevailing in *England*, who have shaken off all fear of God, by subverting Religion, allowing of a detestable mixture of all Sects and Heresies, destroying the Lords annointed our late Sovereign, and keeping in exile our present King, overthrowing Monarchy, and in a word tollerating all Atheisme and profanitie; yet I am confident there is a party in that Kingdome, who makes conscience of that Covenant, and whom the Lord will at last raise up, though at present they be borne down by the tyranny of the Sectaries, and that God will make them and the faithfull party of this land, instrumentall for the re-establishing and restoring Religion in doctrine and discipline to that purity, which God in his word hath allowed, and (it shall be my prayer) our now gracious King to his just rights and inheritance.

Thus when I had lived for a time in the country, making little conscience of performing either publick or private duties to God, delighting more in the society of those who were no great friends to his cause, then in the faithfull servants of God, or those made conscience to walke more strictly in their wayes: At last I was engaged in that late dishonorable Ingagement in *England*; what successe that had, and how the Lord shewed his wrath against us, by rubbing dishonour upon our Nation, and punishment upon a great many both leaders and others, I need not to relate; And among the rest, the Lord did again afflict me with imprisonment; then, while the Rod was upon me, I began in some measure to humble my self before the Lord, and to seek him more earnestly, by making conscience both of publicke and private duties: and I was not wanting of making vowes and promises, that if the Lord would then deliver me from that affliction, I should become a new creature, and forsake my former sinfull courses; but alas, It proved but a hypocritical dash, for no sooner had the Lord removed his Rod, and restored me to my former liberty, but with the dog to the vomit, and the sow to the puddle,

fell I back to my former sinfull course of living. So returning from England, I went to *Holland*, vomiting out against the cause of God, and the persons who had the chiefe managing of affaires, both in State and Church, all the malicious invective raylings, and bitter expressions that I could devise. And there again did I associate my self with *James Grahame*, he having purchased, or as I said before, rather extorted a Commission from this King to enter this Kingdome, that he might be the only man, (as he would have made the world beleeve) to set the Crown upon his Majesties Head. But how the Lord hath disappointed his vain projects, by bringing him to this kingdome to make him a publike example of Justice, where he had been so instrumentall in the shedding of the blood of Gods people, is known to you all. And I cannot but acknowledge the great mercy of God to me in particular, who while I was in the late fight, where I was grievously wounded and taken prisoner, that the Lord did not destroy me as he did many others who fell by the sword, but hath reserved me to this time, where though I am to receive this temporall judgement for my body, yet my hope is, that he intends mercifully for my soul.

Now the main things that are to be here observed, are, First Gods deliverance of his people from the Rods of their oppressours, though it did lye upon them for a time, for some reasons seeming good to our only wife God. That so ye that are Gods people of this land, who have faithfully adhered to his cause, may stand fast; and those who have the publike managing of affairs in Church and State may prove faithfull, and neither upon the one hand incline to that accursed course of Malignancy, which the Lord hath shewen evidences of his wrath against so much; nor upon the other hand, to the associating, or any wayes countenancing those Sectaries of the neighbour Kingdoms, enemies to Religion and all Government; but that all the Land, Rulers & people, would with their hearts & spirits, be thankful to the Lord for his former mercies, and seek him in sincerity in time coming without by respects or ends, only having the glory of God, and the good of Religion before your eyes; and consequently, the King (then) will get what is due. This being done, feare not, but the Lord will deliver you from all your feares, (though they seem great) and get glory to himself, in the destruction of all those that rise up against him; though they seem now to build on the high cliffs of the Rocks, and that the foundations they have laid are very strong, yet the Lord will let it be seen, who builds not upon him, the foundation is sandy, and the building shall not be of long continuance.

The next thing I would have taken notice of, is, That all those of my kinned or acquaintance, and all others who ever have joynted, or would joynt (if occasion should offer) against the cause of God, would take notice of Gods judgements against all who have hitherto opposed his work; and how that he hath carried on the same in despite both of all publike opposition, and all secret plotings and Malignations, Which things if they will lay to heart, and seriously consider, and seek in unto God by unfeigned repentance for their former guiltinesse, and now

themselves faithfull at this nick of time, in standing for the maintenance of
 his truth, they may be sure to meet with a mercifull God, who is slow to an-
 ger, long-suffering, and abounding in mercy: But after so much convincing light,
 and so cleer evidences of the wrath of God against all the opposers of his truth,
 if they will still persevere in their former wayes, and malice to God, his cause,
 and servants, they shall be sure; if God shall not overtake them with temporall
 judgements here; they shall not escape without repentance, his everlasting wrath.
 The last thing which I shall now desire you to take notice of, is Gods dealing
 with me in particular, who notwithstanding of the whole sinfull course of my
 life which I have been relating, both in relation to publick and personall guilti-
 nesse, hath dealt so mercifullly with me. And I shall draw to a period by declaring
 how the Lord convinced my conscience of guiltinesse. For being now this while
 by-past in prison, I began after some few dayes were spent, to run through some
 former passages of my life, and finding that I had twice relapsed, I conceived by
 the lawes of this kingdome, I could expect nothing but death; yet being hopefull
 that friends would use all the wayes they could for my safety, (which trily was
 not wanting) It did not much sink into my minde; yet finding all worldly means
 to fail, and that death was determined by a certain day (which afterward by a
 Petition I gave in, was prolonged for a week) then began the terrours thereof to
 dismay, and much to dash me; but casting my eyes beyond death, upon eterniti-
 y: and casting up the account of my former mispent life, both for publick and per-
 sonall guiltinesse, and laying before my eyes the extremity and perpetuity of the
 pains of hell due to me for same, I was extremely dejected and casten downe, and
 the fear thereof made me frequently to burst forth in tears. Thus finding the
 weight of sin, and of Gods justice lying upon my soule, I was still seeking and striv-
 ing to finde out some way in my self to satisfy Justice, but in this I found much
 matter of discouragement, and no comfort, till God in his mercy did hold forth
 to me a better remedy, and laid down a more sure foundation, by hying from the
 law, to the Covenant of free Grace, and free Love, which was opened up and ex-
 plained to me by Gods servants of the Ministry, and severall other good Christi-
 ans, that gave me a charitable visit in that my distressed condition, for the which
 the Lord comfort their souls, in the day of their trials and Afflictions: And it
 shall now be my prayer, and I shall desire the assistance of yours, that through
 the blood of that Covenant, my sins may be washen away, and my soul may be
 received unto eternall happinesse, Amen.

At Edinburgh, I doe with Heart and Hand subscribe this Declaration,

21 June, 1650.

ALEXANDER CHARTERS.

Witnesse hereto, { M. James Hammillson, } M. Robert Blaickley, }
 { M. John Charters, } M. Laurence Charters. }

F I N I S.

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